



Classroom Activity: Can you hear me?

This activity helps children identify the difficulty that d/Deaf and hard of hearing children face within large, noisy settings.

Rationale:

- It can be difficult for a typical hearing person to listen when someone is behind them.
- It is even more difficult for a typical hearing person to listen when there is background noise — and harder yet when there are 3 or more conversations occurring at once.

How to begin: Have all children sit in a circle

1. Choose 2 children to sit back-to-back in the middle.
2. Tell them to have a conversation (you can provide a topic) while everyone else is quiet.
3. Now have everyone start talking to their neighbour (30 seconds).
4. Have everyone be quiet.
5. Ask the students in the middle if their ability to hear changed.
6. Discuss how difficult it gets to listen the louder it gets.
7. Choose 2 more children to sit in the middle. With all 4 of their backs to each other, ask them to discuss a new topic.
8. After 15 seconds, have the rest of the class start talking with their neighbours.
9. After about 1 minute, ask everyone to stop talking.
10. Discuss the difference in listening ability when there is no eye contact and when there is environmental noise and distractions.
11. Choose 6 more students to sit in the middle. Have them sit back-to-back in a row and discuss a new topic.
12. Repeat steps 8, 9, and 10.
13. Send everyone back to their seats and discuss the activity:
 - What happened when everyone started talking at once?
 - How did you feel talking without looking at the person?
 - What change(s) do you think could have helped you hear your classmates better?
 - Why is eye contact so important?

Imagine how much more difficult listening becomes when you don't hear the same as everyone else.

It is hard to hear every sound in a conversation, and we often assume or make guesses about words without even realizing it. It is hard to fill in the blanks when you don't hear the sentence in the first place.

Key messages:

- Face-to-face communication is important and eye contact makes listening easier.
- Background noise makes listening more difficult.
- Deaf people who use listening technology can hear.
- Be aware and be conscientious when starting a conversation or answering a question in a classroom.
- Speak clearly; do not exaggerate words.